

Elementary **ENGLISH**

MARCH 1948

—
HOW MANY WORDS DO
THEY KNOW?

—
THE RITUAL OF
PRIMARY READING

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

Elementary ENGLISH

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The Importance of Vocabulary in Learning Language Skills

ROBERT H. SEASHORE¹

How many words does a child know when he enters school at the age of six? Teachers, research specialists, and textbook writers commonly tell us that the first grade child knows, at most, several thousand words. Actual experiments show that they know about 17,000 basic words plus 7,000 derivatives.

How many words can a child add to his vocabulary during a year? Professional educators usually estimate the average gain as a few hundred, possibly a thousand words per year. Actual experiments show a gain of about 5,000 basic plus derivative terms per year from the first to the twelfth grade.

How long does vocabulary continue to develop in size? Most writers indicate that human abilities reach their peak in late teens or early twenties, and tend to decline gradually thereafter. Measurements in successive grade ranges indicate that vocabulary size increases far beyond high school ages, through college years, long after graduation, up through the forties at least, and does not decline substantially even by the seventies.

How is vocabulary size related to the development of other lan-

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guage skills? A common answer is that while the size of a person's vocabulary may be moderately related to his achievement in more complex language skills, vocabulary size may also be a freakish specialized development, even an attempted compensation for ignorance in other fields. On the contrary, experiments show that vocabulary size is probably the best single index for the prediction of achievements in nearly all of the other language skills, e. g. diction, composition, reading comprehension, reasoning, general intelligence and even grades in specialized subject matter fields, or scores on school achievement tests.

The tremendous disparity between the beliefs of professional educators and the actual facts of measurement on each of the four above questions should cause any thoughtful reader to pose a number of questions of his own. For example, how is it possible to measure individual differences in the size of a person's English vocabulary? A description of the principal experimental methods and findings will be given in the body of this discussion.

In the meantime let us consider a second question. Granting, for the sake of argument, that such measurements are possible, how then have teachers and scientists accumulated such a remarkable collection of systematized misinformation? Here again let us postpone the detailed analysis for a few pages in order to grasp the full implications of these findings for the teaching profession.

A third question might well be, "How do these erroneous assumptions as to the initial size and rates of growth of vocabulary affect the possible achievements of children, particularly if textbook writers and teachers assume that it is practically hopeless to even try to develop extensive vocabularies beyond the sizes commonly believed to be possible?" Fortunately, the same scientific methods which enabled us to discover these startling facts about vocabulary can also tell us a great deal about their significance and even suggest through various teaching experiments how we could improve the instruction in our regular school work, and in post-school learning.

One of the interesting things about the measurement of vocabulary is the great variety of experimental information which has been available for almost fifty years without producing any significant change in educational thinking about language skills. So far as the writer can determine, the usual result of vocabulary measurement by investigators in English, education, or psychology, has been to so astound the investigator that he has never thought that the true facts could be even stranger. As a matter of fact, many investigators have shown in a great variety of publications that the measured sizes of individual vocabularies are far larger than commonly believed.

The writer himself made the same mistake of thinking that his original experiments had shown the approximate limits of size of individual vocabularies, only to find upon further analysis that he had utterly failed to give people an *opportunity to show all of the words of which they had some reasonable degree of knowledge*. When the investigator takes into account the extent to which he has given people an opportunity to show all of the words they know, the results of nearly all previous measurements are found to fit a relatively simple trend. For example, if one takes a sample of the dictionary as a list of words for which knowledge is to be tested it is found that the larger the dictionary employed, the greater will be the estimated size of vocabulary. Most investigators have assumed that even a vest pocket dictionary, or at most a small abridged one, would give even an adult plenty of opportunity to show his knowledge of most of the words he might know. *On the contrary, it is found that there are very significant numbers of words which are included only in an unabridged dictionary, but which are still very likely to be known to children even in the first grade.*

So much for an over-view of the findings on vocabulary measurements. Let us postpone further interpretive discussion of their significance for the improvement of teaching language skills until we examine in greater detail the experimental findings upon which our reasoning is based.

To avoid misunderstandings, let us agree to define the unit of measurement, "a word," as an entry in the Funk and Wagnalls unbridged dictionary². This dictionary lists two classes of entries: (1) 167,000 *basic* words, such as loyal, which they print in heavy type, next to the margin, and (2) 204,000 *derivative* words, such as loyalize, loyalism, or compound terms having a special meaning, such as Loyal Legion. We do not count multiple meanings of the same basic words (of which the dictionary lists 87,000), nor mere variations in spelling (of which the dictionary lists 13,000). Let us next define the criterion of "knowing" a word as being able to define a term in one's own words, giving the gist of any accepted meaning, or illustrating a proper use of the word in a sentence so as to demonstrate a useful knowledge of its meaning, or multiple choice recognition.

Dr. Mary Smith's study¹¹ of the vocabularies of public school children from the first through the twelfth grades in three school systems (suburban, mixed suburban and rural, and small college and farming towns) gave these results:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Basic</i>	<i>Derived</i>	<i>Total</i>
1	16,900	7,100	24,000
2	22,000	12,000	34,000
3	26,000	18,000	44,000
4	26,200	18,800	45,000
5	28,500	22,500	51,000
6	31,500	18,000	49,500
7	35,000	20,000	55,000
8	36,000	20,000	56,000
9	38,500	24,000	62,500
10	40,200	37,300	67,500
11	43,500	29,500	73,000
12	46,500	33,500	80,000

Note that the average child in the first grade knew approximately 17,000 basic words, plus about 7,000 derivative terms, or a total of 24,000 terms. At this point you will probably say, "But how could

you measure vocabularies?" a fair enough and very important question which lies at the root of most of our present misunderstandings about the size of people's vocabularies. The method is simple, and one which you can verify yourself. Obviously, if we want to find out how many words a person knows we must give him an opportunity to sample all the kinds of words that he knows.

Our method, which was duplicated by Dr. Smith,¹¹ except that she administered the test orally to the first five grades, was to take a systematic sample of words from the unabridged dictionary, in this case the third word down from the top of the left-hand column of every eighth page. This gave us a total of 331 basic words. Comparisons with three other samples taken from different positions at equal intervals throughout the dictionary showed all these samples to be of approximately equal difficulty. We might call this sampling a "Gallup Poll" of the dictionary, since it employs the principle of using a small but representative sample as a basis for estimating the percentage of words which would be known in the whole dictionary. In this case, our sample represented approximately .002 of all the basic words in the dictionary.

When the scores on the odd-numbered words in our list were compared with the even numbered words, it was found that the average variation in score from one half of the test to the other was only 3%. This procedure, then, produced a vocabulary test short enough for convenient administration but representative enough to permit an estimate of the score the subject would make if he were tested on every word appearing in the unabridged dictionary.

Most of our common beliefs about vocabulary size are grossly in error and practically always are underestimates of our actually measured attainments. Note that the average growth in total vocabulary found by Smith was 5,000 words per year from the first through the twelfth grades.

The situation with respect to popular beliefs about the sizes of individual children's vocabularies is still worse. In a follow-up of

Smith's work by Olson,⁶ two teachers in the fifth grade conducted simple informal experiments on developing vocabulary, one by a group project of making a pictorial dictionary similar to the commercial dictionary of Grosset and Dunlap,¹³ and the other by regularly calling attention to new words as they arose in ordinary school discussions and making sure that the students acquired the habit of securing the necessary information about them. The results with these two classes indicate that it is possible to double the rate of vocabulary growth simply by interesting children in learning the significant things about new words.

It even appears that we teachers have grossly underestimated the educational significance of children's everyday experiences at home, on the playground, when traveling, listening to the radio, moving pictures, etc. It looks as if we have not taken much stock in one of our own major emphases of "learning through doing" in the everyday activities of life. One might say that children's vocabularies have been developed in spite of, rather than through the aid of, certain common methods of instruction and those textbooks which limit vocabulary to the extreme. Don't authors, editors, and educational authorities know that these same children read the newspapers and magazines and many other books which are not based on restricted vocabularies? One of Olson's⁶ experiments added a large number of new children's books to the room library, and the children from other rooms were envious of the opportunity thus afforded.

One very interesting finding on vocabulary is that the rate of growth shows no such tapering off between the ages of 12 and 16 years as is found on the Stanford-Binet test. In the opinion of the writer, the leveling off of Stanford-Binet raw scores by the age of 16 may be largely an artifact of the materials chosen. Ironically, this same choice of materials for the Stanford-Binet was made in order to make the test equally fair to those who did or did not have formal education. The items are usually chosen either from those which everyone has an opportunity to learn outside of school, such as mak-

ing change, or from items which are not taught in any formal courses, such as the solution to puzzles. So, in attempting to be fair to all persons by sampling only experiences which a person might find outside of formal course work, the test eliminates most of the more advanced verbal problem-solving skills which tend to be introduced as optional courses beginning about the junior high school level. This is the very time, it will be remembered, at which the tapering off of Stanford-Binet scores is observed. If one defines general intelligence as roughly corresponding to verbal problem-solving skills, it is ridiculous to assume that such problem-solving skills are complete by the age of 16. In fact, most students at this age are only well started on acquiring the more complex and refined methods of problem-solving in such subjects as mathematics, logic, science, etc.

The estimates of adult vocabularies are even farther off than those for children's vocabularies. The writer and Miss Eckerson found average vocabularies of students in three universities to be 61,900 basic words, plus 96,000 derivative words, or a total of 157,000 words. This indicates that people not only keep on increasing their vocabularies beyond public school days, but also that one of the bases for selection of college students is that of vocabulary development. Vocabulary or similar sub-tests are found in practically all college entrance tests. Note also that the proportion of derivative words in the entire vocabulary changes from about 30% in the first grade to about 60% in college.

Other studies indicate that the way in which people learn words makes a great deal of difference regarding the number of new words that can be recognized as derivatives. Some people learn words one at a time, with little transfer to derivatives, while at the other end of the scale, philologists know that practically all modern Occidental languages draw heavily upon a relatively small number of sources such as Latin, Greek, and German. A knowledge of the root words in these languages, together with a knowledge of prefix and suffix variations, enables philologists to make a reasonably good guess at

the meaning of many words which they have not previously encountered.

Let us next ask how you acquired so much misinformation regarding the probable size of individual vocabularies at various ages. From our survey of the previous studies on vocabulary measurement, we find five principal sources of misinformation which should be cleared up in order to get a reasonably accurate estimate of individual vocabularies.

The first source of misinformation is in an early study by an English lay writer, Dean Farrar, who simply lay on his back in his yard one afternoon and listened to the conversation of a group of fruit pickers in the yard next door. At the end of that time he made a guess that the vocabularies of these rural men did not exceed 100 words each. Certainly this was no fair method of sampling vocabularies, but unfortunately the figure started a tradition that vocabularies of adults range from several hundred to several thousand words, estimates which the writer has received from many teachers who did not know the source of the information.

The second source of misinformation is based upon careful measurements which are accurate enough in themselves, but which have been grossly misinterpreted. Thus, various scholars actually counted the total number of different words used by great writers in all of their published works and found the totals to be: for Milton 11,000; for Shakespeare, 15,000; and for Victor Hugo, 20,000. The reasoning which followed was that if Shakespeare, the acknowledged master of the English language, used only 15,000 words, then the rest of us must all have smaller vocabularies. This involves a whole series of false assumptions. In the first place, the "Shakespeare vocabulary" is a list only of the words which Shakespeare used in a series of formal dramas and a few sonnets. It fails to consider that skilled writers usually try to use the simplest, most appropriate word for a list of approximate synonyms, varying from this practice only for variety. We, therefore, have no estimate of how many words

Shakespeare *considered* in writing his works. Furthermore, language tends to be relatively specialized according to the situations and their corresponding specialized vocabularies with which one is familiar. In the second place, these estimates do not take account of derivatives, and considering that derivatives are by no means automatically known as a result of learning the basic form alone, this too results in an underestimate. In the third place, the English language has grown tremendously in the four centuries since Shakespeare wrote and there are vastly improved opportunities in learning through improved education, printing, travel, radio, moving pictures and other forms of communication.

The third main source of misinformation, one which is closely related to the Shakesperean basis of estimate, is the finding of L. M. Terman, that the vocabulary sub-test of the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test, a sample of fifty words from a vest-pocket dictionary of about 18,000 words, gives an estimated average adult vocabulary of 11,700 words. The fallacy here was shown by Seashore and Eckerson⁸ when they made a table of the relation between the total number of words in a given dictionary, and the estimated total size of individual vocabularies based upon a test constructed from such samples. The evidence is very clear that the larger the number of words in the dictionary, and hence the greater the opportunity for an individual to show his knowledge of additional words, the larger will be the individual's vocabularies estimated from this sample.

The fourth main source of misinformation stems from the findings on frequency lists of words such as those of Thorndike and many others, that a running count of all the words found in newspapers, personal correspondence, etc., will be made up very largely of a relatively small number of words which are used over and over again in countless situations. Examples are the verbs *to be*, *to have*, the pronouns, etc. It is reported, for example, that in Franklin D. Roosevelt's acceptance speech when nominated for the first time as President of the United States, 70% of all the words were in the first

500 most commonly used words of Thorndike's list and that 75% were in the commonest 1000 of the same list. The joker is that the words which give the distinctive meaning to a passage are the rarer words whose interrelations are shown by the verbs *to be*, *to have*, etc. If you remove the rarer words you have left only a mystery. It is true that C. K. Ogden,⁸ the originator of "Basic English," finds it possible for persons to communicate with one another on most ordinary business by using only 850 general words (not just common words, but ones that are most necessary) plus 150 specialized terms peculiar to the particular type of business, such as science, travel, or groceries, etc., with which the two people are concerned. From the size of the Basic English vocabulary list and the fact that a philological expert could devise a somewhat roundabout method of describing various situations through the use of 1000 words, many persons have erroneously concluded that other people commonly restrict themselves to some such small list.

Actually, the significant thing about Basic English is, not that the average vocabulary is so much larger, but that so few words are at all capable of expressing ideas for which we ordinarily employ a tremendously larger vocabulary.

A fifth source of misinformation which is also well known among teachers is the set of findings from word counts of the speech of very young children collected in either school or home situations over a period of a few weeks. The common findings, such as those of Madorah Smith,¹⁰ that these vocabularies do not exceed more than several thousand words, are subject to much the same fallacies as those involved in estimating Shakespeare's vocabulary. A mere collection of words used during a limited time in home or school gives the child little opportunity to show his knowledge of words which would be used in the other common situations which he frequently experiences. Neither does it show anything other than the particular word out of various possible alternatives which the child actually happened to use when he wasn't even trying to show how many more words he could use. Finally, it pays no attention to those

words whose meanings could be recognized by the child even though he has not yet found occasion to use them himself. This is probably a large source of error among younger children.

If you agree that individual vocabularies are much larger than most of us have ever guessed, you may still wonder about the significance of this fact. Here, again, another erroneous belief is very common.

It is interesting to note that scores on a general English vocabulary test continue to show extensive gains with no signs of tapering off even at the college level. There are a good many indications of continued progress at about the same rate well past middle life. The writer's interpretation is that a general English vocabulary test affords one of the best indices of development in verbal problem-solving skills because it includes all of the types of concepts with which a person learns to deal, including higher levels of general problem-solving as well as samples from each special field of competency such as law, medicine, business, etc. Each specialist is likely to find in such a test certain terms from the fields of his own special work and interests from related areas, as well as many general terms which he acquires from his vocation and vocational experiences all during life. Further studies are now under way to determine the typical trends in vocabulary size during the period of later maturity from 50 years on up through the 80's. At the other end of the scale, a pictorial version of the Seashore-Eckerson test has been developed for measuring the vocabularies of young children.

Most people believe that our speaking vocabulary is quite limited as compared to our reading vocabulary or to our ability to recognize the meanings of words in isolation. Here, again, the experimental findings flatly contradict the common belief. For example, the Inglis vocabulary test, a selection of words having a difficulty appropriate to high school and college students, gives each word to be recognized in a brief context of a phrase, clause, or sentence. Strange to say, the administration of the test words without the context

showed almost exactly the same size of scores as in a repetition of the test with the context left in place. Evidently, our knowledge of words is quite self-sufficient for each unit, and though we can easily think of contexts which would give added meaning to a single word, apparently this is not usually necessary. It was further shown in the study of Annen¹ that students who were given four comparable sample lists of words from an unabridged dictionary could make approximately the same scores whether they were asked to define the words in their own terms, to use them in sentences which would illustrate their meaning, or simply to check the words as known or unknown. Even more strangely, it was found that after allowing for chance by correcting the scores for guessing in the recognition type tests, the unaided definition vocabulary scores were only 8% lower than the recognition vocabulary scores.

Another experiment by Seashore and Eckerson⁷ showed that if in taking the recognition test the student marked each word as having previously been used in writing, speaking, or both, and further, if they felt that they could possibly use the words correctly, even though they could not recall doing so, these "use" vocabularies were again a very high proportion of the recognition vocabulary, as estimated from the same test. Thus, the number of words which had been used in both speaking and writing was 42,622 while the number of words used in writing alone was 1465 and the number of words used in speaking alone was 1768. Apparently then our writing and speaking vocabularies overlap more than 90%. If, in addition to the writing and speaking vocabularies, we count the possible "use" vocabularies, the total is fairly close to the recognition vocabulary for these same basic words. In another experiment, Lovell⁸ showed that people who had an extensive recognition vocabulary on the Seashore-Eckerson test also tended to know a proportionately large number of additional meanings for these same words. It is thus evident that an extensive vocabulary, far from being a freak, implies also a proportionate depth of meaning for those same terms.

In a still further study, Olson⁶ showed that students having large recognition vocabularies on the Seashore-Eckerson test made proportionately high scores on two types of diction tests. The first task was one in which the person is asked to choose from a list of about 10 approximate synonyms or closely related terms, the one which would be most appropriate for each of about five sentences containing a blank in which the context calls for the preferred use of one of the possible list of words. The second test of diction was in the detection of common confusions among pairs of words, one of which was called for by an illustrative sentence. These pairs of words were taken from a book devoted to the listing of several thousand words which had been found to be commonly confused in everyday usage. Vocabulary size thus implies not only extensity in the number of words known and a wealth of meanings for those words, but also the ability to make fine distinctions between closely related words, all of which are educationally desirable attainments and represent no freakish development of any sort.

In summary, we might say that *words are the "coin of the realm" of knowledge*. Are we, as teachers, assisting students to lay up an adequate store of this intellectual wealth, or are we actually holding back the progress of our students by employing instructional methods and materials which are based upon a limited vocabulary representing only a fraction of the potential learning abilities of the students? How many such exposures will it take to jar our educational system into providing adequate opportunities for intellectual growth during school hours, as compared to the intellectual growth which evidently occurs informally through everyday experiences?

Implications of Vocabulary Studies for the Teaching of Language Skills

What then are the implications for these findings with respect to the teaching of English? First of all we can be quite sure that we have wasted children's time in starting far below their level of competence in most levels of language teaching. Secondly, we have failed

to give them an opportunity to acquire language skills as rapidly as they are able to do so. Third, we have probably, in many cases, drilled on specific words in reading and spelling when far greater gains might have been made by first interesting children in the possibilities and significance of learning words and secondly, giving them a systematic method for analyzing and learning the meanings, pronunciation, and spelling of new words. Fourth, we have largely failed to realize the extent to which everyday experiences constitute a type of education in word knowledge which may easily continue throughout a person's life.

We need to do many things immediately. For example, we should use the same method of dictionary sampling for measuring the size of pronunciation and spelling vocabularies that we have already employed in measuring recognition and use vocabularies. In fact, we can even use the identical lists of words for all four types of measurement simply by first pronouncing the odd numbered words in the list with directions to write down the spelling, then giving the even numbered words in the list as either an oral or multiple-choice printed form of pronunciation test. The third step is to give the full list as a set of words to be defined in one's own terms, or used in an illustrative sentence, while the fourth is the actual multiple-choice recognition test for knowledge of meaning which was employed by Seashore and Eckerson. It would of course be very interesting to be able to measure pronunciation and spelling vocabularies as well as the present use and recognition vocabularies. Furthermore, once we have set up our measuring devices we can more accurately determine a student's progress resulting from any given type of formal training as well as the apparently very large degree of progress which results from informal learning situations in everyday life. A great many of the arguments about the effectiveness of so-called progressive education methods could be resolved simply by finding out how many words in the dictionary students can actually pronounce, spell, define, use or recognize as to meaning, without regard to the specific subject

matter or method employed during formal class work. If, for example, the importance of learning by doing is anywhere nearly as great as we have reason to believe, motivation for word study and training in a relatively small number of methods of word analysis may enable the student to build his vocabulary as much, or more, during out-of-school hours as he does during the periods of formal instruction.

Ryden (7) has shown that the measurement*of French vocabulary is easily possible by means of the same general technique as those employed for English and that because of the wide prevalence of cognate forms in these two languages, college students may know from five to fifteen thousand basic French words even though they have never taken a course in French. He further indicates the potential value of this method of dictionary sampling for setting up criteria of the effectiveness of different methods of teaching a second language. Thus, in the same way that he selected a representative sample of words from the dictionary, it would be easily possible to select a representative sample of changes in verb declensions or case endings, or other parts of speech. Similar samplings could be made of a person's knowledge of the 500 or more commonest idioms employed in French, and so on throughout each of the various phases of language learning such as pronunciation, spelling, meaning, and diction, and for any language.

Ideally it should be possible for teachers of any language to state the objective of their teaching of specific things which a student should be able to do or do better after instruction in a given course of training. By agreeing upon the criteria of effective teaching and measuring the relative progress under each alternative type of training it should be possible to settle such disputes as the claimed superiority of the so-called army methods for the conversational teaching of a second language.

One further type of discussion that has long plagued language teachers could be resolved in a similar way by setting up course ob-

jectives together with parallel test samples of each objective. This problem, namely the transfer of training from one type of language teaching to another, or even from one whole language to another, could be settled with a high degree of certainty by such measurements, and judging from the experience of similar experiments would probably convince any thoughtful teacher of the relative ineffectiveness of a considerable part of his teaching. Only when we have such direct evidence of inadequacy in attaining the criteria which we have set up for ourselves, are we likely to be convinced of the necessity for reform in teaching methods and to take steps to capitalize upon the full possibilities of newer methods.

Parallel studies on the teaching of scientific attitudes and methods of problem-solving are now beginning to show that our static concepts of intelligence are also seriously in error. Reasoning and experimenting are skills which can be taught and measured in the same way as any other skills are taught and measured. We may look for extensive studies in problem-solving skills, or thinking, such as that of Johnson, as one of the next major developments in language teaching.

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The Ritual of Primary Reading

CELIA BURNS STENDLER¹

Probably one of the greatest detriments to the development of good educational programs in the primary grades is the exaggerated importance attached to reading in the first three grades. An examination of typical daily schedules reveals one and one-half out of four or four and one-half hours of a school day are spent in reading. Studies made of retardation show that 98 per cent of the children who fail in the first grade do so because they have not yet learned to read. Primary teachers flock to remedial reading courses and sales of books on the teaching of reading reach best-seller proportions.

As a part of the peculiar position of preeminence which reading holds in the primary grades, a ritual for the teaching of reading has been developed, the strict observance of which is supposed to result in better readers and fewer failures. This ritual may vary in some of its details from locality to locality but in general the pattern is much the same in various parts of the country. It includes not only a set form for the methods of teaching reading but also prescribed instructional materials to be used. Three aspects of the ritual will be examined here: the teacher's manual, the basal reader, and the three-reading-group system.

The Teacher's Manual

If one were to continue the metaphor of the ritual, one might compare the teacher's manual to the sacred book used by the high priest in conducting ceremonies. Indeed, in some classrooms it is kept open during the lesson and the teacher reads verbatim from it. Aside from such an extreme practice, however, there are weak points in the manual which become apparent upon examination. For one thing, the manual is highly specific; it has the motivating remarks with which the teacher opens the lesson, the questions she is to ask about the story, the words upon which she is to drill, the assignment

¹A member of the faculty of the College of Education, The University of Illinois.

she is to make. If one follows the logic behind the manual, one sees that there is an assumption that the same techniques can be used for all children, and that nothing more is involved in the teaching of reading than a mere following of directions on a printed page. Bright children and slow learners, children with a broad background of experience and children with limited environments are all exposed to the same procedures.

One might also question the worth of the procedures which are advocated from another angle. Too often all the spark and all the enjoyment growing out of reading are destroyed by the hashing and rehashing of a story as directed by the manual. Too often the attempt to wring every detail about a story from the children under the name of developing comprehension results in a bored and restless group as well as a bored and irritable teacher. It has been argued that the good teacher uses the manual only as a guide and that the poor teacher is better off following specific directions prepared by experts. However, a "guide" which directs a teacher's thinking in very narrow channels and which fosters uncritical acceptance of one particular pattern for teaching reading would seem to do more harm than good.

The Basal Reader

Still another important aspect of the ritual of teaching reading is the use of the basal reader. The American teacher by and large has been sold on the notion of teaching reading through the use of one set of books. This has been justified on the grounds that (a) the vocabulary used in the particular set of books is limited to words drawn from the list of 1000 or 2000 most commonly used words in the English language, (b) each new word is repeated many times in order to insure children's learning of it, and (c) the introduction of a new vocabulary by way of a different set of reading books is confusing to the children and detrimental to the learning process. On the surface, these may seem to be reasonable arguments in favor of a basal reader, but even a cursory analysis of the one set-of-books

plan reveals many defects. In the first place, questions might be raised concerning the use of words drawn from one of the frequency lists. The most commonly used words tend to be colorless, uninteresting ones like "is," "was," "were," "there," which are very difficult for children to learn. Similarly, words which are full of meaning and easy to remember like "monkey," "doll carriage," and "roller skates" are not included in frequency lists. Horn has shown that if one uses words from a frequency list, a fourth grade child might be expected to know, "The square of the sum of two numbers is equal to the square of the first added to twice the product of the first and second added to the square of the second." He should not know "Daddy helped me with my arithmetic until bedtime. I got a bracelet, a toy dresser and some gum for Christmas. Brother got a baseball and a sled." As Horn points out, the difficulty of a word is determined not by frequency but by the probability that the appropriate meaning has been associated with it.²

A second question which might be raised concerning a basal reading set is the fact that the reading experience it gives children is limited in many ways. There are some first grade children who need to read not one pre-primer but many pre-primers before they are ready to go on to the primer itself. The teacher who uses many sets of books can provide the additional easy reading experience which these children require. Rather than confusing the child, she may be providing him with the necessary opportunity for drill. Then, too, the limited nature of the vocabulary upon which most readers are based may be viewed not as the asset which it is usually claimed to be, but as a detriment. Research reported by Robert Seashore reveals startling facts about the size of children's vocabularies. It would appear that we have grossly underestimated the number of words children know at various age levels and the *number they can learn*. The contrast between children's vocabulary growth out-of-school and the limited vocabulary of school texts is striking.³ Basal

²Horn, Ernest, *Methods of Instruction in the Social Studies*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937.

³Seashore, Robert, *How Many Words Do Children Know? The Packet*, Vol. 2 November 1947, D. C. Heath and Company.

reading books with their inane "Look, look" and "See, see" may be rather dull for the child who is busy learning "Danger, dynamite," "Railroad Crossing," "Bubble gum," "Drive slowly," and other such words and phrases in his out-of-school life.

Reading Groups

The third aspect of the ritual involved in the teaching of primary reading is the rite of the three reading groups. The division of a particular grade into three groups on the basis of ability is considered to be a vital part of the reading process. Peculiar names are assigned to these groups; they are frequently called the Bunnies, the Fairies, the Brownies, or the Woodpeckers in the fond expectation that the children somehow will not discover that the Woodpeckers are the fast readers and the Brownies are the dumbbells. This writer can even testify to having heard a primary teacher say to a class, "Will the Bushy Tails please come up for reading?" whereupon eight children moved to the front. Sometimes to make the system more democratic and more palatable, the teacher lets the children choose the name for their particular group.

An examination of the three-group system of teaching reading reveals many weaknesses of which the classroom teacher is only too well aware. First there is the difficulty of keeping two groups of children quietly busy at their seats while the children in a third group read to the teacher. Workbooks have not been a very happy solution. Not only do they frequently require more supervision than the teacher at work with one group has time to give; not only do they take valuable time to check, but even more important is the question of the contribution they make to the reading process. Many children become quite skilled doers-of-workbook-exercises but poor readers of the kind we need today. Many other children become so bored with the whole rigamarole of reading and answering questions on the reading that they develop an aversion to reading which they may never overcome.

The three-reading-group-system has other defects. Besides the

difficulty of providing adequately for the two groups at their seats, there is the added difficulty of giving the children who are reading with the teacher enough practice in oral reading. Particularly in the beginning reading stages, the young child likes to read aloud as a way of testing his reading. Yet because of the way the system operates, he reads only once during the lesson and then for only a minute or two. During the rest of the lesson he is supposed to sit quietly and listen while others read. Obviously, sixes and sevens do not sit quietly and do not listen. They wiggle and twist and squirm, as Barbara Biber⁴ points out, in an attempt to find release from the tension the reading period produces. The time spent in an oral reading group is almost completely wasted for many children. Furthermore, some children may find it very difficult to read before a group. For the shy retiring child reading might better be an intimate affair between teacher and pupil.

A third weakness of the three-group-system lies in the fact that the children are grouped according to ability. As has already been indicated, children know which group has the best readers and which has the slow ones, regardless of the names given to the groups. This might not be so bad except that reading is the most important activity in the majority of primary classrooms and is so recognized in the community. Success in reading wins the approval of teacher and parent; to be in the slow group means one is doing poorly in the most important work of the school. This is particularly true in middle-class communities where tremendous emphasis is placed not on how well a child does in comparison with his ability, but how well he compares with Johnny Jones down the street. Should Johnny be in a higher reading group, woe betide the first child. Margaret Mead observes that the American child is loved conditionally and if he doesn't make good in school, he may feel the threat of the loss of his parents' love.⁵ Any primary teacher can testify to the pressures placed upon her and upon the middle class child for membership in

⁴Biber, Barbara and others, *Child Life in School*. E. P. Dutton, 1942.

⁵Mead, Margaret, *And Keep Your Powder Dry*. William Morrow, 1942.

the first reading group. These pressures are frequently reflected in the composition of so-called ability groups. Upper and middle-class children dominate the faster reading groups and are rarely found in the slowest group. Despite the fact that there may be much overlapping in ability between any two groups, middle and upper-class children because of parental pressures are placed to avoid the stigma of the slow group.

Teaching Individual Children

Most of the foregoing analysis of the ritual involved in the teaching of primary reading is certainly not new to primary teachers. Many of them realize that just as the old system of teaching reading to a whole grade at the same time with the same book was ineffective, so the basal-reader-teacher's-manual-three-group-ritual has its drawbacks. Although many teachers are experimenting with individual reading programs, unfortunately little has been written of their efforts. Perhaps a brief description of what some teachers are doing to individualize their reading program might serve to illustrate possibilities in the field.

Teacher A in a first grade composed of 26 children had a period set aside during the day for individual and small group activities. In November, when the class was observed during this period, many different kinds of activities were going on. Half of the class were working on games related to reading, on booklets, or were looking at books at the library table. The rest of the class was organized into small reading groups, three and four to a group, scattered in various parts of the room. These were friendship groups, rather than ability groups, made up of children who were congenial and who worked well together. Pat had the first turn in group I and he proceeded to read with gusto ten pages in a pre-primer, going to Teacher A for help on words he didn't know. Mary followed him. She was not yet reading from a pre-primer but had a booklet with stories about a dog she had dictated to the teacher and illustrated herself. She read one of these to the group:

Faith chews.

Faith chews candy.

Faith chews gum.

Coconut chews.

Coconut chews rugs.

Coconut chews shoes.

Coconut chews everything.

The others were delighted with the story and had her repeat it. Then all three children looked at the script and tried to pick out words they knew. The teacher who had been moving about from group to group joined them at this point and did some work on beginning sounds with them, writing words other than "chews" but beginning with the "ch" sound on the board as the children suggested them. Then Larry, who had not yet had a turn to read, showed a picture of his dog doing a trick, and dictated his story to the teacher, who wrote it on the board. Following this she moved on to another group, leaving Larry to read his story from the board with Pat and Mary helping. All three children had two more turns apiece, then went back to their seats for individual activities and another group took their place.

A different approach was used by Teacher B in the third grade. While twenty odd children were reading from library books, working on reports illustrating stories, listening to recordings of stories and the like, Miss B was busy with a dozen more pupils in a reading circle. These children worked in pairs, with each child taking turns reading to his teammate. At the same time one such team of two pupils, sitting on either side of the teacher, took turns reading to her. When they had finished, another team took their place so that the teacher heard every child in the group read. Since she was sitting next to the pupil reading to her, it was quite possible for her to hear despite the fact that five other children were reading at the same time. The children read from a variety of materials, including readers of different grade levels and library books.

The possible variations of an individualized reading plan are many. There is no ritual to be observed; teachers are encouraged to find through experimentation the plan that best fits their particular situation. Emphasis is placed upon providing a maximum period of time for each child to *read*, not rehash a story, nor drill on a list of words half of which he may know, nor sit and try to listen while someone else reads. The bright child has the chance to read at his own speed and the slow learner no longer has the stigma of belonging to the "dumbbell" group attached to him. Classrooms where an individualized reading program is being carried out are classrooms where children are having an opportunity to learn to read most efficiently and in accordance with sound principles of emotional hygiene.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VOCABULARY

(Continued from Page 152)

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Oral Language and Inter-Group Harmony¹

ALTHEA BEERY²

How do you interpret the topic assigned for this discussion? Let us agree, before we proceed, on the connotations the key words of the topic shall have. Shall we think of *oral language* broadly enough to include a consideration of the context, or setting, in which communication between individuals or groups takes place? The smile, the lifted eye-brow, the tone of voice, the courtesy of attentive listening, the purpose, and the general atmosphere of the situation are all pertinent. Certainly our consideration may deal with all types of speaking situations children meet—from casual conversations, through discussion, story-telling, and dramatics to planned assembly programs. The term also legitimately includes the oral interpretation and discussion of literature and children's writings.

The term *oral language* does, however, limit us largely to face-to-face communication. But that limitation is not unduly restrictive because it is face-to-face situations, in appropriate settings and with proper guidance, which nurture the development of wholesome human relationships for the elementary school child. It costs him relatively little to have "right" attitudes toward the peoples of China, for example, but it may be more costly for him to respect the dignity and the basic human rights of individuals from *every* group with whom he has daily or occasional contact. Out of the patterning of right attitudes and kindly daily speech to individuals he meets and works with now will grow respect for the rights, and understanding of the basic attitudes, of peoples whom he meets at present only

¹This paper was read at the San Francisco meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, November 29, 1947.

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through reading and discussion and will meet later chiefly through his country's representatives.

The young child spells *inter-group intra-group* at first. Indeed, none of us ever graduates from the course which teaches us how to get along with others within our own group. With shifting emphasis *our* group becomes our family, our professional colleagues, our fellow-citizens, and, let us hope, the entire human family.

To students of child development the general stages of growth into larger, more-inclusive groups and the facts of individual idiosyncrasies of growth are familiar. Recently, teachers have become more sensitive to sub-groups within the class group. They are beginning to observe behavior of children within groups, to explore such devices as questionnaires and socio-metric diagramming, and to use techniques that tend to unify the group and give status to "fringers" and "isolates."

The final word *harmony* means not singing or playing in unison but the blending of many tones, not in a cacophony of sound but in a pleasing total effect to which each note makes its contribution. Today we rightly stress the likenesses which unite us rather than differences which divide, but we are also learning to treasure those differences which enrich our society.

Taken as a whole, the topic implies that the oral language program of the elementary school should contribute to harmonious human relationships. It also implies that consideration of problems of living together will vitalize the language program. Thus, to the harassed teacher who says, "Must I add the problems of intercultural education to an English curriculum already over-crowded?", let us reply that it is not an addition but rather an infusion—a point-of-view that communication skills are best learned as children deal with situations they face in learning to live with others.

The English program will always need content. Of course, children need to learn in the elementary school to speak effectively and

to behave appropriately in conversation, in discussion, in conducted meetings, at the telephone, in dramatizations, and during introductions. They will grow all the more surely in these powers if the content of thought they employ deals with concerns that are vital to them in living together.

The teacher who believes that one of the major objectives in education is that individuals develop not only faith in the democratic process but also real skill in using it in all human relationships knows that school opportunities to speak and to listen serve a deeper purpose than merely to increase the skill of children in the correct or even the persuasive use of their mother tongue.

So far, the implication has been that the topic might have been worded either "Growth in Oral Language through Intergroup Harmony" or "Growth in Intergroup Harmony through Oral Language Activities." But a further restatement is possible. Although time will not permit its development here, the topic might also read "Growth in Intergroup Harmony through the Development of Oral Language Power and Skills." One trustworthy way to increase understanding between individuals and groups is to master our mother tongue to the point not merely that words will come "trippingly to the tongue" but that they will be wisely chosen and so ordered that real exchange of ideas takes place. Researchers have found that one way to help a nursery school child achieve a more secure place in his group is to teach him some physical skill which the group admires. It should be likewise apparent that we place an effective tool for social acceptance in the hands of the outsider in the class, or of a member of a minority group for that matter, when we help him learn to express his ideas correctly, pleasantly, and forcefully in the various speaking situations he meets. As the child increases his language power and refines his skills, he increases his ability to carry his own weight with his group.

Children learn from us, their classmates, and their parents that saying the right thing in a kindly way will help them in their contacts with individuals and in their status with the group. They learn that the expression of prejudice and aggression will wound and divide the group, but what is the friendly and yet honest speech overture in a given situation is harder to come by.

Possibly, however, teachers have been too concerned with overt expression and not enough with the inner attitudes and tensions which remarks reveal. During these early years it is important that we be willing sometimes to note silently the remarks of children which reflect prejudice or misunderstanding and use them as evidence of the attitudes that still need to be built in these children.

Of course, we must avoid moralizing or preachments, and guidance that leads to priggishness, but only at our peril will we neglect helping children judge the moral quality of their remarks and the effect of what they say on others. The last thing that we want to do, however, is to prohibit the derogatory epithet in the teacher's presence if in so doing we drive a festering stereotype of attitude toward a minority group underground into a child's basic personality pattern. In other words, we want children to speak kindly to and of various individuals and groups but not at the price of insincerity and hypocrisy. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh," and it is with the abundance of the heart that we are truly concerned.

As we turn to a consideration of the opportunities to develop inter-group harmony that oral language activities present, examples will be cited from the classrooms of a group of Cincinnati teachers³ who met informally to share ideas on this topic. The illustrations are grouped under such familiar headings as conversation, discussion, and dramatics.

³Alma Cantor, Leah Carr, Allene Cerney, Margaret Cronin, Bessie Gabbard, Adeline Harris, Ruth Hubbard, Ruth Kopp, Irene Lammers, Martha Leeds, Pauline Lutes, Elizabeth McCoy, Opal McWhorter, Louise Page, Louise Rairden, Elaine Scarff, Thurza Sternberg, Mary Belle Wright.

1. *Conversation*

As stated before, sometimes the teacher merely listens to casual conversation to note the level of understanding present or to observe the need for later discussion or appropriate experience.

Following a class period spent in making plans for a Hallowe'en parade, a Negro girl remarked "I'm going to be Cinderella," to which a white classmate rejoined, "What are you going to do— wear a white mask?"

The children attending a nearby parochial school often cut across the yard of the public school on their way home. It happened that a third grade class from the public school was just coming into the school building from a neighborhood excursion when the parochial school children were being dismissed. The statement was made by one child, "They are Catholics." Another child said, "Yes, they go to a different church." Another added, "And they go to a different school." And so the conversation continued about how the Catholic children were different. Finally one little girl ended the conversation and seemed to satisfy the group with the comment, "The only way they are really different from us is that they get out of school at 2:30 and we have to go until 3:30."

Sometimes a question from the teacher will lead the child to make his own analysis. One day a seventh grade boy, without any preamble, said to his teacher, "Miss C——, do you know what a colored man in the South does when he meets a white man on the street? He steps off the walk and says, ' Yes sir, Mr. White Man'." To the teacher's query, "What do you think of such behavior?" the child answered thoughtfully, "I don't think it's right. We're all alike."

Frequently, of course, the teacher's guidance of conversation periods is more direct.

Eugene is a large, overgrown kindergarten boy whose home life is very unhappy and insecure. The patrol wagon calls frequently to

pick up either his mother or stepfather, or both. Eugene's first days in school this year were very trying to all concerned. He was extremely aggressive and had no respect whatever for ownership. The merest suggestion offered concerning his behavior was met with a defiant "no," followed by whimpering.

During the conversation period, one day when Eugene was absent, some child who lived near him began telling all the things that Eugene did to cause trouble in the neighborhood. From this arose a discussion of how the children could help people who had trouble getting along with others, how kindness to them might make them act differently. The group decided that if Eugene knew they liked him, it would be easier for him to get along.

A day or two later, when it was necessary for Eugene to obey, he staged a temper tantrum, throwing a block across the floor, kicking over a chair, and finally throwing himself on the floor and screaming. The group became very quiet, and it was suggested that Eugene would feel better if they let him alone until he was finished. As he quieted down, one little boy went to him and said, "I like you, Gene. I think you act lots nicer than you did when you started to school." Upon hearing this, Eugene began to sob as if his heart would break.

The children seem to have taken their responsibility for helping Gene get along rather seriously, but with no air of condescension. They really like him. As one little girl said, "I do believe Gene acts better at home, too. Maybe he feels better!"

Who revealed what in the following episode?

Marjorie, a blond, remarked to her teacher, "Watch me have to march with a colored girl in the school procession." "And," giggled the teacher as she repeated the remark to a colleague, "sure enough, she did!"

2. *Discussion*

In one second grade the group included the priest, the minister, and the rabbi in their list of community helpers. During discussion of helpers in another second grade, the teacher asked the children, "If a white policeman meets a little Chinese or Negro boy or girl who is lost, will he help him just the same as he would help you?" One group of intermediate grade children discussed the things that everyone wants out of life.

One morning an eighth grade girl reported to her classmates the following incident she had witnessed the day before while riding the streetcar.

A Negro woman got on the crowded streetcar and bumped several people in her progress toward the center of the car. In each instance the person bumped apologized, thinking it might have been his fault. At the next stop a white man got on and, as he passed, either bumped the woman or was bumped by her. He said, "Look out who you're shoving, you nigger." The woman answered, "Nobody's going to call me that and get away with it," and shoved him hard. Two Negro men standing near got to her. One said, "Forget it. He didn't mean anything." The other one said to her, "Now, don't start trouble."

She subsided but the man went on, "Niggers got to be put in their place," whereupon she gave him another good shove. He pulled out a knife and started for her. Two white men got hold of him, yelled for the conductor to stop the car, and put him off.

After the incident was told, the children were allowed to discuss it. The discussion period lasted for more than an hour and followed a course somewhat as follows:

One child, "Weren't you scared?"

The girl answered, "Of course, I was. I thought there'd be a fight."

Another commented, "Those Negro men and the other white men were all right."

Query from one: "Why do you suppose the white man acted that way?"

Comments by others: "He might be from the South."

"He might have been angry at something before he got on the car."

"He might have been drinking."

"He surely didn't have any manners."

Then the teacher asked, "What about the woman?"

Comments: "Well, how'd you like to be called names?"

"She started it with her bumping and shoving."

"She wasn't much."

Teacher: "Do we know enough about her to decide why she acted that way?"

Comments: "No, maybe, she was mad at her boss."

"Maybe she'd been drinking."

"Maybe she was crazy."

"If you lived the way she probably does, you'd be mad or crazy, too."

Teacher: "What do you mean?"

Comments: "How'd you like to live with your whole family in two rooms down on Cutter Street?"

"Or scrub floors for a living," etc.

Teacher: "Let's list and discuss the things that might make her the kind of person she is." The children listed:

1. Slums or poor housing.
2. A poor job or poor pay.
3. The fact of being shunned by whites.
4. Limited opportunity.
5. Background of ignorance.

Below are some of the remarks made toward the close of the discussion:

"Maybe we wouldn't be any better."

"Why weren't the two Negro men on her side?"

"Not everybody turns out like that from living downtown."

"Well, the white man was worse than she was."

"He probably had some of the same things wrong with him."

The teacher who led this discussion had attended summer workshop on intercultural education and had heard Alice Keliher, just a few days previously, lead an adult group in a session of our local intercultural workshop in analyzing a described situation. More important still, the teacher is essentially democratic in her relationships with pupils.

3. *Discussion growing out of reading*

Many illustrations could be given of conversation and discussion that arose following the reading aloud in the classroom of books involving problems of living together. Parts of *All About Us*⁴, by Eva Knox Evans, were used with both a first and a sixth grade group. In the first grade which is attended largely by white children, the teacher asked, following a discussion of differences in color, what color they thought best and which group would have the most good people in it. The majority responded that the white would. Then Gail, a dark little brunette with long black pigtails, said with a great deal of vigor, "No, there are good people everywhere. There are good people and bad people." When asked to explain what she meant she said, "Good people do good things; bad people do bad things. There are good people among all colors of people."

This was too much for Jerry. "Not Japs," he said. But Gail answered, "Yes, my daddy was over where the Japs are and he said there are good Japs, too." Then she told the group that her great-

⁴Published 1947 by Capitol Publishing Company.

grandmother was an Indian, adding proudly, "And I take after her. She had black hair and reddish brown skin and brown eyes."

The sixth grade teacher who used this same book as a basis for discussion was a Negro teaching Negro children. These are some of the questions her pupils raised:

Why wasn't just one race of people made so we wouldn't have race problems?

If all colored people could be made the same color as Joyce or Rebecca (light brown), would we still have the same troubles with white people?

Could colored people get more of the chemical, carotene, to lighten their skins so they would be accepted by white people?

Is the color of skin the main reason for trouble between races?

Many of the reactions to reading were more casual. A third grade group, listening to the teacher reading aloud from *Billy Bates*⁵, decided that "Some colored people are nicer than we are, for Billy's father was polite while the white clerk was rude."

One fourth grade teacher, herself a Negro, didn't want her class to miss *Story of Dr. Dolittle*⁶, so she read it aloud to them without the derogatory epithets. In the same class a Negro lad read one of the *Nicodemus* books⁷ to his classmates, omitting the exaggerated dialect. Surely, these are both examples of emotional maturity!

The group of teachers who met with me felt that literature offered considerable possibility as a basis for discussion of group pressures. It is clothed with vitality; at the same time, a discussion of characters and situations in books avoids the embarrassment of personal experience. Among the titles they used are, *Call Me Charley*⁸, *Two is a*

⁵by Mabel Wagner, Published 1946 by Friendship Press.

⁶by Hugh Lofting, Published 1920 by J. B. Lippincott Co.

⁷by Inez Hogan, Published by E. P. Dutton.

⁸by Jesse Jackson, Published 1945 by Friendship Press.

*Team*⁹, *We Sing America*¹⁰, *Gooseberry Jones*¹¹, *Democracy*¹², *The Moved-Outers*¹³, and *Willow Hill*¹⁴.

4. *Recordings and Films.*

Impressed by the response which Alice Keliher got from a group of seventh and eighth graders following the use of Helen Hayes' recording of "My Little Boy",¹⁵ one teacher experimented with its use and found that it stimulated similar analysis and comments by her pupils. Carefully selected films of the type of "You and Your Family" will also give children a common denominator of experience upon which to base discussions of problems of group living.

5. *Dramatics.*

One fourth grade group in a school with a large number of Jewish children used the time during the noon hour while they were waiting to be called to lunch for informal dramatization of *One Hundred Dresses*¹⁶ and a comic book on tolerance. The enterprise quickly developed into a type of socio-drama in which children created skits. Skits were enacted showing the adjustment of a German refugee boy, a Jewish boy, and a Negro boy who wanted to be accepted. It was significant that the children with secure status in the group wanted to play the part of the rejected boy while the insecure children avoided the role. During Brotherhood Week the group presented original skits in an assembly program.

These examples from classrooms, even though somewhat distorted by being pulled out of their setting in the daily life of the room, illustrate how a sensitive and alert leader of children can find in personal confidences of individuals; in casual or guided conversations; in the exchange of ideas growing out of reading; in discussion based

⁹by Beim—Chrichlow, Published 1945 by Harcourt, Brace.

¹⁰by Marion Cuthbert, Published 1936 by Friendship Press.

¹¹by Will Gerber, Published 1947 by Putnam.

¹²by R. and O. Goslin, Published 1945 by Harcourt, Brace.

¹³by Florence Means, Published 1945 by Houghton Mifflin.

¹⁴by Phyllis Whitney, Published 1947 by David McKay.

¹⁵New York University Film Library, 1947.

¹⁶by Eleanor Estes, Published 1944 by Harcourt, Brace.

on personal experiences, recordings, and films; and in dramatics, opportunities to use the spoken word to interpret social situations and to foster mutual understanding and respect. However, it would be a mistake to leave the impression that oral language is the only tool for such learning. Fully as effective were such activities as the Greeters Committee used by one school to welcome newcomers, the plan of having older children carry the trays for the youngest at the beginning of the year, and the school sing which involved not talking about being a part of the whole school but enjoying together a satisfying experience.

Many intelligent adults are today depressed by the lack of understanding between nations and between sub-groups within our own country and by the bewildering way in which the use of the same phrases does not seem to guarantee a meeting of minds—much less a common understanding or any unity of attitude. Those of us who are responsible for the school guidance of elementary children are deeply aware of the necessity for developing in children "bridges of understanding" between groups and among members of the same groups. We are aware, too, of the fact that many basic attitudes towards peoples are relatively firmly fixed in children by the end of the elementary school and are, therefore, aware also of the necessity of making sure that all phases of education contribute toward the development of right attitudes.

What then are some of the barriers to the use of oral language to promote inter-group harmony?

The prejudices of teachers themselves or their lack of knowledge in the field of intercultural education.

The unfriendly attitudes toward groups acquired unconsciously by children from parents and others.

The weight of tradition that enjoins us to use language periods for "nice topics" and enjoyment of "pretty stories and poems."

The reluctance of school authorities and teachers to deal with real issues that may be controversial.

Over-intellectualizing with its consequent thinning of the emotional tone of much present-day oral composition.

The authoritarian pattern still prevalent in American schools which denies children the opportunity to have a significant voice in planning and evaluating their own actions or the life of the school.

What we are saying is that oral language can contribute best to inter-group harmony when we have teachers more dedicated to the democratic process, teachers and children freed to operate in that climate, school programs flexible enough to deal with the social issues faced by parents and children in the local community, and an evaluation of English in terms of the effectiveness with which children communicate ideas and use language to promote social ends.

What Is Creative Writing?

R. VAN ALLEN¹

A search for techniques of teaching creative writing to children in the elementary school cannot be carried far until the problems of "What is creative writing?" arises in one's mind. Many writers are prone to call any written work "creative" if it has a slight variance from the prescribed form of school composition which has been the "hitching-post" of too many language arts teachers since the "horse-and-buggy days." It is true that such a spark of originality is welcomed in such a school environment, but when we speak of creative writing, we must have more of a standard than the mere satisfaction that a child has gone beyond the requirements of an assignment and added some real interest to an assigned topic.

There are many points of view as to what creative writing is, but as used in this discussion it will mean that when a child writes creatively he expresses, in one way or another, his feelings or his intellectual reactions to some experience he has had, to something he has seen, heard, or otherwise come in contact with through his senses. This expression of personal reactions constitutes the quality of *originality*, because no one other than the writer can produce it. It is his own contribution. It cannot be forced from without by topic assignments or adherence to form, but must come from within. The writer must have more than the words. He must have the idea, the insight, the formation of an image.

This type of writing is that of artistic self-expression. It is personal, individual, imaginative, and highly perishable. To keep it alive there must be a complete freedom to experiment and complete assurance of an understanding and respectful reception of the product regardless of its nature.

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To further clarify the meaning of creative writing, we contrast it with the better known and more widely taught expression that communicates functional ideas. This *functional* writing is more utilitarian, realistic, or intellectual, and it needs the discipline of correct mechanics to be socially acceptable. This correct form seems intrinsically a function of this realistic writing, because other people are concerned with it. This is the type of writing in which the author works more as a reproducer of known facts, conditions, or ideas, presented in his unique fashion. (This is a point misrepresented by many as original or creative writing). The material exists outside the writer; hence the writing is not so intimately a part of the individual. Correction and verification can be required without the loss of an idea and without injuring the individual, because the material is objective and sources are rather permanent.

This is not so in *personal* writing where the sources lie almost wholly within the individual and where there is no final authority other than personal taste. Time out to correct story after story may so curb the swift imagination or so fatigue the uncertain and immature writer that desire to write turns to dread of writing. The confusion that results from efforts to shape children's ideas to an adult's conception and pattern has resulted in mimicry and imitation by even the brightest children.²

It is not our purpose to discredit the value of practical writing and to present personal, or creative writing, as a panacea for the writing problems in the elementary schools. There is a balance between the two types that must be maintained, but to give all writing the same treatment is to sound the death-knell to the creative spirit of children. Teachers must know what creative writing is before they can teach it.

²Ferebee, June and others, *They All Want to Write*. New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1939, pp. 184-85.

When they regard it as the writer's own business, they subject it to far more subtle treatment than practical writing. The teacher becomes a confidential auditor, not a judge. His function is not to pronounce, "This is right," and "This is wrong." The teacher must lead the child to find his own vein of expression, to speak and write in his own vein, to know the value of intuition, to cultivate evocative moods, and to have a beginning and a method.

A matter of prime importance for the teacher is that in its early stages creative writing should be "creative" first and "writing" second. In the early stages, especially, he should be careful to guard against too much concern for handwriting, spelling, and punctuation. It is well for him to remember that many of the world's best stories were handed down by word of mouth for generations before copies were made, and even then they were without benefit of punctuation and correct spelling. Teachers of creative writing must remember that commas and semi-colons never made a masterpiece. Good writing is beautiful because it is the individual's thoughts and fancies shared with others in sincerity and truth.

A Choral Reading Selection

BERNE CAROLINE THUNE¹

The following selection was written for use in Choral Reading. The contents were suggested by class experiences in a social studies unit.

It requires 40 children, 4 groups of 10 each, plus 1 child as narrator or soloist. One group stands on the auditorium floor at foot of stage.

SOLOIST:

I hear America, America singing.

North

South

East

West

(Each group calls out its designation in turn in unison in staccato clear tones.)

SOLOIST:

A song of praise, a song of work, a song of freedom's making.

NORTH (in unison):

Here are forest trails, shining waters, broad wheat fields.

Farmers

Workers

Business

Pleasure

Deer

Fish

Birch bark

Snow

Hills

Forests

(Each of these is called out rapidly, one at a time, by first one and then another of the 10.)

¹7018 Broadway Terrace, Oakland 11, Calif.

Now all 10 of the NORTH group speak again in unison:

Hear the ring of axe, the grind of tractor, the lap of water.
See the smoke of business, hear the noisy clatter—in this land
of sky and water, this land of tall tales.

SOUTH (in unison):

A place of warmth and sunshine, cotton fields, plantations,
song and laughter.

Oil

Peanuts

Cotton pickers

Share croppers

(Separately by 10, one at a
time.)

Planters

White pine

Cocoanut

Palm

Alligator

Mesa

SOUTH (in unison again):

Hear the song of Negro workers, the sigh of wind through
pine, pueblo; the mating call of alligator—in this land of field
and canyon, where the warm sun shines.

EAST (in unison):

Feel the tang of salt spray, hear the muffled fog horn, taste
the deep sea scallops!

Rocks

Sea horses

Cotton mills

New York

Appalachians

(Singly by each
of 10.)

Fields
 Streams
 Homes
 Fishermen
 Whirr of wheels

EAST (in unison):

Over the mountains white clouds blowing, over the cities
 smoke clouds luring; turn of wheel and quiet spaces, land of
 rock and ocean.

WEST (in unison):

Plains and mountains, forests and deserts. Rugged land and
 rugged people.

Snow-capped Rockies

Timberline

(singly)

Rushing water

Far horizons

Orchards

Oranges

Redwoods

Indians

Cowboys

10 gallon hats!

WEST (in unison):

Space and height, long trails winding, cry of coyote, place
 of rugged beauty.

(Once again each group separately calls out its designation
 in unison in staccato clear tones.)

North

South

East

West

Look and Listen

Edited by LILLIAN NOVOTNY¹

Radio

In an excellent editorial in the January issue of the AER Journal, entitled, "Is Your School Doing Its Job?" Tracy Tyler, editor, makes an excellent appeal for the unique function of education in a democracy. His concluding paragraphs merit quoting:

"Today we are beginning to realize that learning takes place best when it meets a need; that education involves a change in the organism; that no change occurs unless there is sufficient motivation; and that the most successful and useful learnings will take place if the process begins with individual needs. Thus, by determining the abilities, interests, and needs of each individual and by making a serious effort to fit instruction to him we have the only defensible method of education for democracy.

"Radio is one of the new elements in today's environment and it provides a perfect example of the failure of the schools to keep pace with individual needs. More than 90 per cent of the homes have radios. Children spend more time listening to the radio than they do attending school. Undirected and unsupervised

radio listening, many believe, has a more marked effect on attitudes, habits, and points of view than any other single social institution. The school cannot compete with the radio, but it can use it in the classroom to enrich the curriculum; it can establish workshops to provide instruction in the radio arts; it can teach discriminating listening; it can help youngsters to detect propaganda; and it can develop appreciation for the good and resistance to the bad. The teacher or school which fits radio into its curriculum has taken a long step forward in helping youngsters adjust to today's environment."

In the same issue, appears an article on "Radio, a Community Resource," by Dorothy M. Frost, Teachers College, Columbia University, which offers many challenging suggestions for the possibilities of utilizing the powerful resources of radio.

From Madeline S. Long, Consultant in Radio Education, Minneapolis Public Schools, we received concrete evidence of a forward step in com-

¹Miss Novotny is a teacher in the Chicago Public Schools, and a member of the Council's Committee on Radio and Photoplays.

munity relations: a recommended listening bulletin prepared by Miss Long in cooperation with the Minnesota Congress of Parents and Teachers. A key is used to indicate programs suitable for young children, el; for junior high, J; for senior high, S; and for adults, A. The network programs listed are those recommended by the Federal Radio Education Committee as published in *Scholastic Magazine*; and every PTA unit is urged to subscribe to *Senior Scholastic, Combination Edition*, for the radio and motion picture reviews and recommendations. Miss Long's suggestion is,

"There are a great many good radio programs on the air. We can keep them on the air and obtain more like them by listening regularly to the good ones and writing our appreciation and criticisms to the station, the network, and the sponsors. Why not form a local listening group for some of the better programs?

"You can ask your local station to carry the best program of the network with which it is affiliated."

In an article in a recent issue of *Scholastic Teacher*, Olive McHugh, a member of the radio education department in Toledo, Ohio, suggests writing for radio to stimulate young-

sters in writing: commas, correct speech, and usage become of vital importance as part of the children's medium of expression. Miss McHugh suggests that there is probably no best way to start, but that students, themselves, are already familiar with the best textbook in the field of radio: the programs on the air, good and bad. She says, "I should say start from here. The class will enjoy listening for observation and analysis of what makes radio writing different from other forms of writing expression. They will be quick to recognize the characteristics of the radio style; the importance of dialogue, of apt and succinct expression; the need for visual imagery; the new devices of sound and music and their relation to the spoken word. These observations, together with reference to a good handbook of radio writing, will provide materials for stimulating discussions that should precede the first writing assignments." The article continues with step by step suggestions for promoting and sustaining interest in this field of writing.

Mark Woods, president of the American Broadcasting Company, has announced that beginning Sunday, February 1, the four FM broadcasting stations owned and operated by ABC will broadcast by frequency modulation all regular amplitude modulation programs.

The expansion of FM service affects KGO-FM, in San Francisco, WENR-FM, in Chicago, KECA-FM, in Los Angeles, and WXYZ-FM, in Detroit. KGO-FM went into operation last year, while the other three ABC FM outlets inaugurated their service on the first of this year. Operation schedules thus far have called for each station to be on the air five days a week, six hours a day. Under the new schedule, all FM transmitters will operate simultaneously with the AM transmitters, generally 16 hours a day.

Before the end of the current year, the American Broadcasting Company plans to have television stations in operation in Chicago, Detroit, New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

In addition to making its video debut with transmitters in these five key cities, it was also announced that plans are under way for the establishment of three preliminary regional networks, from which an over-all national television network will later be developed. The three loops proposed for the immediate future will link Chicago and Detroit, San Francisco and Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York. ABC's Chicago outlet, to be known as WENR-TV, probably will

be the first on the air, with its premiere scheduled for September. It is expected that Detroit will follow in November, Los Angeles and San Francisco in December, and New York probably later in the same month.

NBC has made use of students' avid interest in comic books. In a colorful edition entitled, "On the Air," they have presented, as a colorful adventure, the complete story of what's behind the scenes at NBC—what it takes to make a radio show. Send for your copy from your local NBC station.

Another use of the children's interest in comic books has been seized upon by Columbia Records, Inc. In colorful detail, they call attention to the following albums: *Puss in Boots*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, the *Gingerbread Boy*, *Peter Rabbit*, *Little Black Sambo*, *Cinderella*, *Nursery Songs*, *Peter and the Wolf*, *Robin Hood*, *Treasure Island*, *Herman*, the *Littlest Locomotive*, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *The Shoemaker and the Elves*, and the *Pied Piper of Hamelin*. Pick up a copy at your local record dealer.

A few remaining copies of *Recordings for School Use*, the catalog of appraisals prepared in 1942 by Robert Miles in collaboration with

the Recordings Division of the American Council on Education, are now available through FREC for only 50 cents—just half the original list price. The catalog was one of the "Radio in Education" series published by the Evaluation of School Broadcasts Project at Ohio State University. The purpose of the catalog was to facilitate the wise purchase and effective use of phonograph recordings and radio transcriptions in schools. A list of several hundred records and transcriptions attempts to provide sufficient information about the content, understandability, and appeal of each program to enable teachers to make intelligent selections from the many recordings then available in each subject-matter field. The detailed analyses of these recordings should still prove valuable to teachers in making selections of current materials.

Remittances should be made payable to the Federal Radio Education Committee, U. S. Office of Education.

The *Reader's Digest*, Education- al Department, 353 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, New York, announces six filmstrips in *Our American Heritage Series*:

TOF 201. "The Birth of Our Freedom" (47 frames) reaches back into history to show the roots of our

freedom in English history and how the early American colonists translated their heritage into practice in the New World. The first strip is climaxed by the creation of the Declaration of Independence.

TOF 202. "Freedom's Foundation." (51 frames) carries the story forward through the critical days before and during the formation and acceptance of the American Constitution.

TOF 203. "Freedom's Progress" (42 frames) is primarily a study of democracy's most potent weapon—universal suffrage. Through explanations of the safeguards, processes, and forms of voting are given in this strip

TOF 204. "Freedom Today" (52 frames) deals squarely with the role of youth in preserving and perfecting our freedom. In a sense, it is a culmination of the series, which clarifies points in preceding filmstrips and correlates the entire series with the lives of the students.

TOF 205. "The Vocabulary of Freedom" (46 frames) strips elements of vagueness and unreality from the words and concepts that are fundamental to any discussion of America's great documents.

TOF 206. "The Literature of Freedom" (42 frames) emphasizes

writings of a less formal character than the great official documents. Dramatic pictures and text frames carry across to students much of the adventure and deep emotion that have inspired our writers to celebrate freedom. Books and poems mentioned tie in the students' experience, abilities and interests.

An illustrated, 40-page Teaching Guide is included with each series. It not only presents suggestions for use of the strips in classrooms, but contains in sequence, reproductions of all frames in each strip with points for the teacher and provocative questions and suggested activities for students.

The Guide and six filmstrips are packaged together in an attractive book-like file box. The entire kit is priced at \$19.50.

The Film Council of America with headquarters at 6 West Ontario Street, Chicago 10, Illinois, boasts 46 film councils in 45 cities which represent 25 states. A very active local group is the Chicago Junior Red Cross Teachers' Film Forum. Initiated by the Chicago Chapter, Junior Red Cross, and sponsored by local superintendents, the Chicago Film Workshop, and the Junior Red Cross, meetings are held the third Saturday of each month. Teachers of Cook,

Du Page, and Lake Counties have an opportunity to preview and evaluate classroom films, strip films, exhibit materials, and recordings on the countries and cultures of the world. They are able to discuss together how these media may be used to inculcate in their students an appreciation of the customs and ways of life of peoples of all nations.

Members each make an evaluation of each film shown. This analysis includes a listing of the various phases of the curriculum which might be supplemented by using the film (geography, civics, history, music, art, literature); the grade level where it might be effectively used; a rating of technical features, such as sound, photography, and script; and a general criticism. These individual ratings are then compiled by the Junior Red Cross staff; and these reports, together with bibliographies of audio-visual material, are made available to the members.

At one meeting, when teachers expressed the opinion that a particular film would be too mature for a seventh grader, a student in the audience who had accompanied one of the members stood up and declared that he was in seventh grade and had derived considerable benefit from the film showing. Plans are under way, at the present time, to invite repre-

sentative groups of children of different age groups to participate in the meetings.

Discussions of the films are led by outstanding people in the film field or in the particular subject area. These leaders include Dr. Stephen Corey, University of Chicago; Dr. Clyde Kohn, Northwestern University; Russell Babcock, member of the Mayor's Commission; and Colonel Bench, formerly Director of Visual Aids, Chicago Public Schools.

Each meeting features an exhibit of allied materials collected by the Junior Red Cross staff from local sources: the Chicago Public Library, the Library of International Relations, and student work from teachers in the field. Correlated reading lists are provided by the Chicago Public Library and the University of Chicago Instruction Center.

Membership for one year in the Teachers' Film Forum entitles two teachers from one school to attend one monthly program, and to evaluate reports and bibliographies of the audio-visual materials. Membership fees are \$5. per year, per school, or \$12. per year when one Audio-Visual Committee serves a school system. This school fee simply covers the cost of the films and the projection fee, and goes directly to the Chicago Film Council.

Three new bibliographies of audio-visual materials are available through the Audio-Visual Service, Chicago Chapter, Junior Red Cross, 529 So. Wabash Avenue, Chicago 5, Illinois. These are: International Interdependence; Music; and Government and Citizenship.

Seven universities throughout the United States have been selected to award Encyclopaedia Britannica Films summer tuition scholarships for audio-visual study during the summer of 1948, it was announced by Stephen M. Corey of the University of Chicago, chairman of the educators' committee which made the selections. The universities where the fourth annual EB Films scholarships will be awarded are: University of California at Los Angeles, University of Chicago, Indiana University, Oklahoma University, Pennsylvania State College, Syracuse University, and the University of Wisconsin.

The universities themselves will select persons who will receive the scholarships, which are contributed by EB Films. Applicants must be teachers or administrators who have a special responsibility for audio-visual instruction and who wish to make more effective use of classroom motion pictures. Applications should be sent to the universities where teach-

ers wish to study before April 15, 1948.

As it takes no part in the selection of universities where scholarships will be awarded, similarly Encyclopaedia Britannica Films does not select scholarship winners, leaving their choice entirely to the seven universities.

All teachers and educators desiring to apply for the tuition scholarship awards should write directly to the following people at the universities where they would like to study this summer: F. Dean McCluskey, University of California, Los Angeles, California; Stephen M. Corey, University of Chicago, Chi-

cago 37, Illinois; L. C. Larson, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana; Garold D. Holstine, Oklahoma University, Norman, Oklahoma; A. W. VanderMeer, Pennsylvania State College, State College, Pennsylvania; James W. Brown, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York; Walter A. Wittich, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

A catalog, including general information about the preview, lease-purchase, rental, and replacement of CORONET instructional films is now available. Write to Coronet Instructional Films, Coronet Building, 65 E. South Water Street, Chicago 1, Illinois.

A CHORAL READING SELECTION

(Continued from Page 179)

Now all 4 groups speak together for the first time saying:
Oh! land of plenty, land of fruitful harvest, land of contrast,
land of promise, land of freedom, land we *love*.

SOLOIST (with reverent feeling):

Vision for the worker,
Vision for the employer,
Vision for the statesman,
Vision for today and tomorrow and tomorrow.

(Then all can sing "God Bless America" in unison or some other patriotic selection.)

The Educational Scene

Here are the Junior Literary Guild selections for the month of March, 1948: for boys and girls 6, 7, and 8 years of age, *Roger and the Fox* by Lavinia R. Davis, Doubleday & Company, Inc., \$2.00; for boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years of age, *Rufous Redtail* by Helen Garrett, The Viking Press, Inc., \$2.50; for older girls, 12 to 16 years of age, *Assorted Sisters* by Florence Crannell Means, Houghton Mifflin Company, \$2.50; and for older boys, 12 to 16 years of age, *Secret Sea* by Robb White, Doubleday & Company, Inc., \$2.00.

The Bureau of Reference, Research, and Statistics, the Division of Curriculum Research, and the Division of Elementary Schools of the New York Board of Education have collaborated in the production of two excellent pamphlets—*Social Studies, Kindergarten - Grade Two*, and *Arithmetic, Kindergarten-Grade Three*. Especially the first of these will be of great interest to all teachers of the language arts in the elementary school. The discussion is based upon the needs of young children and describes a curriculum planned in the light of these needs. The brochure reflects the same high

standards set by these agencies in the pamphlet series of which these are a part.

The American Library Association announced that circulation figures for 1947 were about 8 per cent higher than for 1946, although some libraries reported increases of as much as 100 per cent. Unsettled world conditions apparently led most people to read books on psychology and personal adjustment rather than atomic energy. The average increase in the circulation of children's books was between 4 and 5 per cent. Appropriations for libraries increased, but not sufficiently to keep pace with rising costs.

The Packet, a service bulletin for elementary teachers published by Heath and Company, presents in its March issue an article on planned reading programs integrated with the social studies. It was written by Marian A. Young of the Philadelphia Public Schools. Fred G. Walcott has written a vigorous article on "The Limitations of Grammar" in the January issue of the University of Michigan School of Education *Bulletin*. An entertaining pictorial sketch of the work of the public schools is published by the Board of Education of San Francisco. Group

Dynamics is the theme of the February issue of *Educational Leadership*.

Dean William H. Waite of the Minnesota State Teachers College at Moorhead describes, in the February issue of *Elementary School Journal*, a survey of reading instruction in the schools of Omaha, Nebraska. He finds the usual range in reading ability at the various grade levels, the same superiority of girls over boys, of children of high socio-economic level over those of low socio-economic level. The study is of interest chiefly because it reflects a strong interest in the problem on the part of the school authorities. No evidence that fundamental approaches to the problem are being made is presented in the article.

That previous knowledge and experience are an aid to reading has long been believed, but concrete evidence on the subject has been rather meagre. Jeanne S. Chall conducted an experiment, reported in the December 10, 1947, issue of the *Educational Research Bulletin*, which tends to corroborate the thesis. Miss Chall used health education materials to test the effectiveness of previous knowledge in improving reading.

A list of children's stories, annotated and classified according to periods in American history, has been

published by the H. W. Wilson Co. The title, *America, Past and Present*. The authors, a class of teacher-librarians at the Chicago Teachers College under the direction of Eloise Rue. The price, 75 cents. For advanced elementary grades.

The National Education Association has just released a study by John K. Norton and Paul R. Mort reporting an inventory of public school expenditures in the years since 1940, when an earlier report entitled, in its popular form, *Unfinished Business in American Education*, was published. The new publication reveals that the same inequalities exist among the states, that some communities are completely unable to support an adequate system of schools, and that increased expenditures for schools have not kept pace with rising costs. The report may be obtained from the N. E. A. for 25 cents.

A mimeographed unit on "A Study of Community Relationships through Literature," for the sixth grade, was produced at the Intergroup Education Workshop, the University of Chicago, last summer. Copies are available for 20 cents each from the Intergroup Education in Cooperating Schools division of the American Council on Education, 437 West 59th Street, New York 19, New York.

Review and Criticism

[The brief reviews in this issue were written by Helen R. Sattley, Hannah M. Lindahl, Irene I. Irwin, Elizabeth Guilfoile, and Mary E. Kier.]

For Early Adolescents

The Great Hope. By Marguerita Rudolph. Drawings by Abbas John Day, \$2.75.

Pearl Buck says in her introduction to this book, "In these days when the two most powerful nations in the world, the United States and Russia, view each other across barriers of governments and militarism, it is wise for the peoples to remember that behind these man-made barriers human life goes on in the eternal and universal round----it steadies one's faith in humanity to read of such people . . . May the will of the peoples of that country and ours demand and secure peace." This is the true story of the childhood and growth of a Russian Jewish family before and during the Revolution, of their hardships during the years of the civil wars, the murder of their parents by bandits, and the subsequent dividing of the family. Three of the children came to the U. S.; three stayed to take their part in the

new life of the old country. But even though miles and years and finally even language divided them, they all had a common bond in the great hope of what life could offer in these two countries. Thoughtful sixth graders, on up. H. R. S.

The Helicopter Adventure. By Alexander Klemmin. Illustrated by Flavia Gag. Coward McCann, \$2.75.

This exciting story of the experiences of two owners of a helicopter, a pilot and his young brother, will appeal to adolescent boys. The helicopter, figures in several thrilling adventures, such as a shipwreck, a forest fire, and the photographing of the Mexican volcano, Mt. Paracutin. Not least of the adventures is that of finding gold in the wilds of Northwest Canada.

Satisfying as these vicarious adventures may be to many adolescent readers, the story will also interest youth who wish to learn more about helicopters. The author was an instructor in aeronautics and at present is editor of *Aero Digest*. Therefore, the book contains authoritative information. H. M. L.

Hawk, the White Indian. By Phillips D. Carleton, Illustrated by Paul Laune. Bobbs Merrill, \$2.50.

The story is told by the main character, David Aiken, who was captured by the Indians in the year 1760 and forced to live with them for three years. He was adopted into the tribe and quite enjoyed his life with them until his tribe revolted against the English. Then David escaped to return to civilization and warn the settlements of an Indian uprising. This book will interest boys from 12 to 16 who like such stories of early days. I. I. I.

Women Doctors Today. By Sally Knapp. Portraits by Robert Hallock. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, \$2.50.

Biographies of twelve outstanding women doctors are presented in this book. The women, representing a variety of racial and national backgrounds, were chosen because of their success as practitioners in both general and specialized fields of medicine.

Although the book will be of special interest to girls who have ambitions to enter the professions of nursing or medicine, the biographies will be inspiring to all adolescents because of the portrayal of the overcoming of obstacles through personal determination and application.

H. M. L.

Bird Dog Bargain. By Kenneth Gilbert. Illustrated by Ernest Norling, Henry Holt.

Fourteen-year old Joey becomes the proud owner of a bird dog which he successfully trains for field trials. The fact that the puppy was gun shy to begin with, and that in the field trials he had to compete with a dog trained by a professional, adds to the suspense and interest of the story. To the adult who is concerned with child delinquency and who feels that some of it may be due to lack of family unity and consequently to a lack of security on the part of the child, not one of the least of the charms of this book is the fine feeling of family loyalty that is portrayed. Ages 10 to 12. I. I. I.

Great Men of Medicine. By Ruth Fox. Random House, \$2.50.

Nine men who greatly shaped the course of modern medicine are the subjects of the nine chapters of this book. The first is Vesalius who was studying in Paris in 1533 and who stole a skeleton from the gallows and made anatomy a science.

The last is Robert Koch who late in the nineteenth century was proving his tiny laboratory the germ theory of disease. The other seven were Parè, Harvey, Jenner, Laennec, Semmelweis, Morton, and Lester.

Each of these men battled the unbelievable prejudice of his time

against new theories in medicine. Each worked against great personal obstacles. Nearly all of them were dreadfully poor.

It is a record of profound heroism, dramatically written. The appeal should be to mature high school students.

E. G.

Gateway. By Amelia Elizabeth Walden. Morrow Junior Books, \$2.50.

Girls in their early teens will enjoy this story of two girls, Mig Domonkos and Peyton Marshall, who are utterly different in disposition and background. Peyton is the spoiled, over indulged daughter of wealth, for whom Mig's mother is engaged as a tutor. There is conflict between the two girls until Peyton finally sees how wrong she has been and the two become friends. There is a healthy boy and girl interest in the story and Peyton's transformation does not take place so quickly that it is unconvincing.

I. I. I.

Young Eagles. By Eva K. Betz. Illustrated by June Driscoll. \$2.50.

This book is for boys and girls in their teens who are interested in historical stories. The action takes place in New Jersey just before the outbreak of the American Revolution. The story is full of adventure and mystery and will hold the reader's interest until the end.

I. I. I.

For the Middle Grades

The Ten Commandments in Today's World. By Frances Fullerton Neilson. Drawings by Nils Hogner. Thomas Nelson and Sons, \$2.00.

In this book each of the commandments is explained so that children can understand how they work and how they apply to their own living and their own world. If all who are children today could be taught to obey these ancient laws, tomorrow's world would be less troubled than it is today. Ages 7 to 12.

I. I. I.

Animal Homes. By George F. Mason. Illustrated by the author. Morrow Junior Books, \$2.00.

This is a book for children interested in animals and the different ways in which they construct their shelters. Many habits of these animals are told and the book will be a welcome addition to the library of children who are interested in this phase of nature study. Ages 8 to 12.

I. I. I.

Winter Telling Stories. By Alice Marriott. Illustrated by Roland Whitehorse. William Sloane Associates, \$2.50.

Here are thirteen stories of the mythical type. The central figure in them is Saynday, the Indian who sometimes does good things and sometimes makes trouble. These

stories will be more fun for reading aloud than for reading alone. They will also be of interest to the teacher who is alert for ideas for her class to try in creative writing. I. I. I.

Big City. By Berta and Elmer Hader. Macmillan, \$2.50.

A large picture book of New York City. Mother and Father Day, with the help of Billy and Betty, show Cousin Jim the interesting sights of the city they call home. They visit subways and elevateds, the largest department store and Radio City, large apartment buildings and the medical center, tenement districts and one family home districts, interesting foreign centers and the bright lights of Broadway, churches and the bathing beaches. Much of New York is here in pictures and text. Third graders can read it for themselves but it will be useful for older and younger people, too. H. R. S.

We Four Together. By Helen Weisenstein. Illustrated by Egon Weiniger. David McKay Company, \$2.00.

Children in the middle grades will enjoy this lively account of the little quadruplets, three boys and a girl, who lived in the city of Vienna. Their lovable ways, their loyalty to one another, their gay spirits, and their exciting experiences are woven

into a charming story of child life.

Effective black and white illustrations add to the attractiveness of the book. H. M. L.

For Younger Children

Wild Animals and How to Draw Them. By Amy Hogeboom. Vanguard, \$1.25.

Another combination picture book and book of information about wild animals by Miss Hogeboom. A photograph of each of the wild animals and simple step-by-step line drawings that will help children to draw these animals is supplied. A book that should be helpful to any child over six years of age.

M. E. K.

Faraway Holiday. By Eula Long. Illustrated by the author. Morrow Junior Books, \$2.00.

This is a very short story of a little Mexican girl who makes a flower wand of white ginger flowers and so earns the right to march in the procession in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe. There is happy family feeling in the story. It seems that the author is more successful in her story-telling than in her drawings, which do not add much to the attractiveness of the book. The large type and simplicity of the story make it suitable for youngest readers.

I. I. I.

The Magic Flower. By Valentin Kayev. Translated by Zina Vaynow and Florence Watts. Colonial House, \$1.25.

The paper jacket indicates that this is a translation from the Russian and one of the "Books of the World for America" series which this house is publishing. As such, it may be an interesting addition to a library or classroom collection. As a storybook, it is slight. Zhenya, who might be any little girl in an country, receives a flower with seven magic petals, each capable of granting her a wish. She squanders six of them and uses

the seventh to bring happiness to a little boy, thereby finding her own happiness. American children will not enjoy the poorly reproduced illustrations. Simple fairy tale age.

H. R. S.

Hoppity. By Marjorie Barrows. Pictures by Sue Simons. Rand McNally, \$.60.

Hoppity is a very happy little rabbit searching for a birthday present for his mother. Another "Glowing Eye" book with bright colored pictures to entertain the little folks. Ages 3-6.

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